

MANANNAN

By Pam Crowe (second verse) from Rhymes of Mann

In troubled times, Manannan will
Protect this Isle from every ill,
His cloak of mist he'll spread around,
From sea, our Island can't be found.
He'll sweep aside that swirling cloak,
Safe harbour for Manx fisher folk.

THE THOUSLA CROSS

By Lin Marsh – from “The New Chronicles of Mann”

Whatever were your thoughts that night when wind and waves grew high?
When strange and rocky shore appeared beneath a stormy sky
A new and unknown coastline drew closer into sight
As man and boy transfixed by fear, prayed someone see their plight

No anchor chain or pump could keep the Jeune St Charles afloat
And wind and current overpowered both ship and smaller boat
All six were thrown upon the rocks at mercy of the waves
And one by one the two ship's boys were swept into their graves

At dawn's first light, from hill above, the sorry wreck was seen
And quickly men from Port St Mary came upon the scene
These selfless seamen, brave and strong, determined on a plan
To carry boat across the Howe in relays – man to man

Such courage and such strength they had, what seamanship they showed
But after battling wind and tide their course they could not hold
And once again, no thought for self, came forward five more men
Another boat was carried 'cross the Howe and launched again

Through raging sea and fearful tide with every hope grown dim
These gallant men ne'er stopped to think of risk to life and limb
And this time though the craft be frail, no thought of just reward
These men of Mann with skill reached out to pull those souls aboard

And proudly we remember them as o'er the Sound we gaze
Where beacon shines for all to see and rescue from the waves
Before the rock with elegance the Thousla Cross stands tall
In memory of those heroes bold – a lesson to us all.

THE PEEL LIFEBOAT

By T. E. Brown

Of Charley Cain, the cox,
And the thunder of the rocks,
And the ship St. George —
How he baulked the sea-wolf's gorge
Of its prey —
Southward bound from Norraway;
And the fury, and the din,
And the horror, and the roar,
Rolling in, rolling in,
Rolling in upon the dead lee-shore!

See! the Harbour Master stands,
Cries — "Have you all your hands?"
Then, as an angel springs
With God's breath upon his wings,
She went;
And the black storm-robe was rent
With the shout and with the din,
And the horror, and the roar,
Rolling in, rolling in,
Rolling in upon the dead lee-shore!

And the castle walls were crowned,
And no woman lay in swoond,
But they stood upon the height
Straight and stiff to see the fight,
For they knew
What the pluck of men can do:
With the fury and the din
And the horror, and the roar,
Rolling in, rolling in,
Rolling in upon the dead lee-shore!

"Lay aboard her, Charley lad!"
"Lay aboard her! — Are you mad?"
With the bumping and the scamper
Of all this loose deck hamper,

And the yards
Dancing round us here like cards,"
With the fury and the din
And the horror, and the roar,
Rolling in, rolling in,
Rolling in upon the dead lee-shore!

So Charley scans the rout,
Charley knows what he's about,
Keeps his distance, heaves the line —
"Pay it out there, true and fine!
Not too much, men!
Take in the slack, you Dutchmen!"
With the fury and the din
And the horror, and the roar,
Rolling in, rolling in,
Rolling in upon the dead lee-shore!

Now the hawser's fast and steady,
And the traveller rigged and ready.
Says Charley — "What's the lot?"
"Twenty-four." Then, like a shot —
"Twenty-three,"
Says Charley, "'s all I see."
With the fury and the din
And the horror, and the roar,
Rolling in, rolling in,
Rolling in upon the dead lee-shore!

"Not a soul shall leave the wreck,"
Says Charley, "till on deck
You bring the man that's hurt."
So they brought him, in his shirt —
O, it's fain
I am for you, Charles Cain —
With the fury and the din
And the horror, and the roar,
Rolling in, rolling in,
Rolling in upon the dead lee-shore!

And the captain and his wife,
And a baby! Odds my life!
Such a beauty! such a prize!
And the tears in Charley's eyes.

Arms of steel,
For the honour of old Peel,
Haul away amid the din
And the horror, and the roar,
Rolling in, rolling in,
Rolling in upon the dead lee-shore!

Sing ho! the seething foam!
Sing ho! the road for home!
And the hulk they've left behind,
Like a giant stunned and blind
With the loom
And the boding of his doom —
With the fury and the din
And the horror, and the roar,
Rolling in, rolling in,
Rolling in upon the dead lee-shore!

"Here's a child! don't let it fall!"
Says Charley. "Nurse it, all!"
O the tossing of the breasts!
O the brooding of soft nests,
Taking turns,
As each maid and mother yearns
For the babe that 'scaped the din
And the horror, and the roar,
Rolling in, rolling in,
Rolling in upon the dead lee-shore!

See the Rainbow bright and broad!
Now, all men, thank ye God,
For the marvel and the token,
And the word that He hath spoken!
With Thee,
O Lord of all that be,
We have peace amid the din
And the horror, and the roar,
Rolling in, rolling in,
Rolling in upon the dead lee-shore!

LISTEN to recitation by John Kennaugh 2014: <https://vimeo.com/88433728>

This poem is based upon the story of the wreck of a Norwegian barque named the "St. George," which occurred off Peel in the year 1889.